

B. H. Voss 1836

A NEW
AND
COMPREHENSIVE
GAZETTEER OF VIRGINIA,
AND THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:
CONTAINING
A COPIOUS COLLECTION
OF
GEOGRAPHICAL, STATISTICAL, POLITICAL, COMMERCIAL, RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND MISCELLANEOUS
INFORMATION, COLLECTED AND COMPILED FROM THE MOST RESPECTABLE,
AND CHIEFLY FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES:
BY JOSEPH MARTIN.

TO WHICH IS ADDED
A HISTORY OF VIRGINIA
FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE YEAR 1754:
WITH AN ABSTRACT OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS FROM THAT PERIOD TO THE
INDEPENDENCE OF VIRGINIA,

WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR THE WORK

BY A CITIZEN OF VIRGINIA.

William Henry Brackenbrough

CHARLOTTESVILLE:

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miles, it is called the Dragon Run; on either side of which, there is a space varying from a quarter of a mile to half a mile in width, covered with valuable cypress, and other timber, and of inexhaustable fertility. This land is at present valueless to its proprietors from the frequent inundations, caused by the obstructions to the flow of water in the bed of the Run. The attention of the Legislature has been called to the removal of these obstructions, and thereby bringing into market an immense quantity of timber, and the produce of a large district of land which would thus be made arable:—But the want of energy in the owners of the adjoining farms has hitherto prevented, and it is feared, will continue to prevent the execution of any plan for effecting these desirable objects. The prevailing religion of this county is the Baptist.

Population in 1820, 4,057—in 1830, 4122. Middlesex belongs to the fourth judicial circuit and second district. Taxes paid in 1833, \$799 06—in 1834.—On lots, \$14 70—on land, \$364 23—on 1140 slaves, \$285 00—451 horses, \$26 06—2 studs, \$30 00—11 coaches, \$29 25—7 carryalls, \$7 00—85 gigs, \$49 66 Total, \$806 90. Expended in educating poor children in 1832, \$539 91—in 1833, \$416 42.

TOWNS, VILLAGES, POST OFFICES, &c.

CHURCHVILLE, P. O. 76 ms. from R. and 135 from W. situated 6 ms. from the Essex line and 7 from Urbanna.

HEALY'S, P. O. situated on the Piankatank river, 12 ms. below Urbanna.

URBANNA, P. V. and county seat, 83 ms. a little N. of E. from Richmond, and 142 a little E. of S. from W. C.—situated on the northern shore, and near the mouth of one of the branches of the Rappahannock called Urbanna creek. It is a sea port, located 18 ms. above the mouth of the river,—a small but healthy village. It contains besides the ordinary county buildings, 9 private dwelling houses, 4 mercantile stores, 2 taverns, 1 cabinet maker, 1 tailor, and 1 carriage maker. Population 175 persons, of whom 2 are resident attorneys, 4 regular physicians, and 7

officiating ministers of the Baptist church. Urbanna for many years seemed rapidly going to decay, but of late has much improved in population, the number of its stores, &c.—There is much travelling through this place, to and from the adjoining counties, by persons who take the steamboats here for Fredericksburg and Baltimore. The northern mail (via Tappahannock,) and the southern mail (via York,) are each transmitted twice a week through this county, stopping at Churchville, Urbanna, and Healy's post offices.

County Courts are held on the 4th Monday in every month. Quarterly in March, May, August and November.

JUDGE SEMPLE holds his Superior Court of Law and Chancery on the Tuesday after the 3d Monday in April and October.

NANSEMOND.

NANSEMOND was created by act of Assembly in the year 1645, and formed from a part of the county of Upper Norfolk. It is bounded on the N. by Hampton Roads,—E. by Norfolk county,—S. by Pasquotank county

of North Carolina,—W. by Blackwater river which separates it from Southampton,—and N. W. by the county of Isle of Wight. Its length diagonally from S. W. to N. E. is 40 miles, mean breadth 16, and area 640 square miles;—and it extends in lat. from $36^{\circ} 30'$ to $36^{\circ} 54'$ N. and in long. from $0^{\circ} 6'$ to $0^{\circ} 41'$ E. of W. C.

Rivers.—The *Nansemond* is the largest river in the county, about 31 miles in length from its mouth to Cohoon's mill, where it heads—it empties into Hampton Roads, and is 7 miles wide at its mouth. Its course is N. N. E. and runs nearly in the middle of the county as far as it goes. It is navigable to Suffolk for vessels of from 75 to 100 tons, and for small craft and lighters to Cohoon's mill. Nansemond river affords the finest oysters, crabs, and fish.

Western Branch Creek is a branch of Nansemond river, about 10 miles in length;—it heads at Urquhart's mill, and empties into the Nansemond about 7 miles below Suffolk. Vessels of 75 to 100 tons burthen can be navigated as far as Milner's five miles above its mouth. Just below Milner's, this creek forks, sending a branch to Scott's mill: it is navigable for vessels from 35 to 40 tons as far as Scott's mill, which is distant about 5 miles from its mouth. The course of the Western Branch is nearly E.

Chuckatuck Creek rises at Chuckatuck mill—is about 10 miles long, and empties into James river. It is navigable for vessels of 35 to 40 tons for 6 miles. It courses E.

Black Water river is the dividing line between Nansemond and Southampton for the distance of about 12 miles: course S. E.—any vessel which can come in at Ocracoke Inlet, can be navigated to South Quay.

Somerton Creek is formed by the junction of Knuckle and Bear Swamps, in the county of Nansemond, it then runs about 8 miles in this county: course S. W.—and empties into Chowan river, about 2 miles from the Nansemond line.

Lake Drummond is supposed to be from 15 to 18 miles in circumference: it differs but little in its diameter from N. to S. or E. to W. The water has perhaps gained more celebrity than it merits: it is slightly diuretic: in some seasons of the year it will affect the bowells also a little, like any other water if confined, and impregnated with so much vegetable matter. It contains a quantity and variety of fish. The brown perch and chub are large and very fine: there are other varieties of perch, not so highly prized;—also pike, gars, catfish, eels, &c. Few wild fowl are found on this beautiful lake, which is somewhat remarkable, and the few which frequent it are principally ducks. Nearly the whole of the lake is within this county;—perhaps a mile of the eastern extremity may be in Norfolk county: the depth of water is from 12 to 14 feet a few hundred yards from the margin. The bottom of the lake is hard and firm.

The *Dismal Swamp Land Company's Canal*, from the basin (which is on the bank of Cedar Creek,* a branch of the Nansemond,) to the lake is 10 miles;—running for 6 miles nearly S. E. and then S.—width from 10 to 12 feet;—depth from 3 to 4 feet. The water of the canal flows into the lake: it is connected with the Dismal Swamp Canal Company through the waters of the lake. From tide water to the lake the distance is 10 miles.

The Dismal Swamp Land Company's land (with the exception of a small

*Craney Creek is the ancient name.

part which is in the county of Norfolk,) is situated in the county of Nansemond—quantity of acres *forty thousand*. The growth consists of juniper, cypress, gum, ash, maple, pine. The quantity of shingles usually exported by the Company is from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 millions per annum, amounting to \$40 or \$50,000—governed by fluctuation in prices.

Agriculture is at a low ebb, although certainly improving within a few years. More attention has been paid to making and using manure from farm pens. The benefit of marl has been fully tested, yet although abundant on the river and creek banks, is still used in a limited way. The principal crops are corn, oats, peas, some wheat and cotton. The staple is Indian corn.

Tar, turpentine and staves are not so abundant as formerly;—they still form the principal and leading articles of trade in the county.

Population in 1810, 10,324—1820, 10,494—in 1830, 11,784. Nansemond belongs to the first judicial circuit and first district. Taxes paid in 1833, \$2067 73—in 1834 on lots, \$175 20—on land, 920 12—2320 slaves, \$580 00—1411 horses, \$84 66—6 studs, \$66 00—45 coaches, \$97 07—1 stage, \$1 00—4 carryalls, \$4 00—231 gigs, \$136 15. Total, \$2064 18. Expended in educating poor children in 1832, \$238 51—in 1833, \$438 97.

TOWNS, VILLAGES, POST OFFICES, &c.

CHUCKATUCK, P. V. 110 ms. from R. and 214 from W. Chuckatuck can scarcely be termed a village, but is more properly a thickly populated neighborhood, embracing about one square mile; the central part of which is at the head waters of a creek bearing the same name, and which makes into James river about 8 ms. from this place. It is situated on the stage road leading from Smithfield, Isle of Wight county, to *Suffolk, the county seat*, 10 miles distant from both places, and about 20 from Norfolk by the nearest land route. It contains 20 dwelling houses, 3 mercantile stores, 1 tavern, and 1 house of public worship, (Methodist.) There are about 125 inhabitants, including the operatives employed in the *Smithfield and Chuckatuck Cotton Manufactory*, erected by a company. This establishment runs 1000 spindles propelled by water power. It is in successful operation, and largely contributes to the business appearance and support of this place. Within this square mile is an old venerable Episcopalian brick church, around which there are some hand-

some and valuable farms. The population is about 300 persons; of whom 1 is a physician. The neighborhood possesses great advantages, having a level and fertile soil, fish and oysters of the finest kind in abundance, and navigation at the doors of its inhabitants.

SOMERTON, P. V. near the southern side of the county, and within 1 mile of the North Carolina line; 120 ms. S. E. of Richmond and 242 from W. C. This little village has 6 dwelling houses, with 1 mercantile store, 1 house of public worship, (Methodist,) 1 common school, 1 tavern, 1 cabinet maker, 1 tailor, 1 blacksmith, and 1 milliner and mantua maker. Somerton is situated on the stage road leading from Norfolk, Va. to Fayetteville, N. C., 45 ms. from the former; also on a road making indirectly from Murfreesboro', N. C. to Smithfield, Va. Population 40 whites and 60 blacks. The country around is fertile and thickly settled, having within the circumference of a few miles 40 farm houses.

SUFFOLK, P. V. and seat of jus-

tice, situated on the right bank of South Quay is situated on Black Nansemond river, 28 ms. N. W. by W. of Norfolk—102 ms. S. E. by E. of Richmond, and 224 a little E. of S. from W.; in lat. $36^{\circ} 43'$ N. and long. $0^{\circ} 27'$ E. of W. C. Suffolk is a flourishing and wealthy little village, containing, besides the usual county buildings, about 300 houses, 20 general stores, 4 houses of public worship, (1 Episcopalian, 1 Baptist, and 2 Methodist,) 1 Dorcas society, 2 well organized temperance societies, and 5 common schools. The mechanics are, 1 tanner, 2 saddlers, 3 boot and shoe manufacturers, 3 tailors, 3 cabinet makers, 2 house carpenters, 3 blacksmiths, 2 wheelwrights, &c. Population 1200 persons, of whom 2 are attorneys, and 2 regular physicians. The Portsmouth and Roanoke rail road passes through the centre of this town—distance from Portsmouth 17 miles—from Portsmouth to the termination at the Roanoke 77 miles.

County Courts are held on the 2d *Monday* in every month. *Quarterly* in *March, June, August, and November*.

JUDGE BAKER holds his Superior Court of Law and Chancery on the 15th *May* and 30th *September*.

SOUTH QUAY, P. O. 95 ms. S. S. E. of Richmond and 217 from W. C.

Water river, which is a branch of the Chowan river of N. Carolina, and makes the dividing line between Nansemond and Southampton counties. It contains about half a dozen houses, and its principal pursuits are agriculture. There is a post office and also a surveyor's office for the collection of the revenue. The latter having been established in consequence of the importance attached to the place during the Revolutionary and late war as a Quay, or depot for goods—its inland advantages recommending it as such. There are only two families residing here, consisting of 40 or 50 persons; 2 of whom are attorneys. In the immediate vicinity are several physicians, both scientific and Thompsonians, meeting houses, schools, mercantile stores, and mills; and the neighborhood is somewhat densely settled. Should the contemplated rail road between Portsmouth and the Roanoke be completed, of which there is every probability, the value of this place will doubtless be greatly enhanced, as it will pass immediately by South Quay. This, together with the Dismal Swamp canal, which connects the Carolina and Virginia waters, already having a very sensible influence on this part of the country.

NELSON.

NELSON was created by act of Assembly in 1807, and formed out of a part of Amherst county. It is situated immediately between the Blue Ridge and James river. Bounded by Albemarle N. E. and E.—by James river separating it from Buchingham S. E.—and Amherst S., and S. W.—by the Blue Ridge, separating it from Rockbridge W.—and Augusta S. W. The longest line is diagonal from the extreme southern to the extreme northern angle—about 40 ms.—greatest width 28—and area 560 sq. ms.—extending in lat. from $37^{\circ} 32'$ to $38^{\circ} 02'$ N. and in long. from $1^{\circ} 50'$ to $2^{\circ} 7'$ W. of W. C. Its declivity is S. of S. E.—and it is drained by the different branches of Rock Fish and Tye rivers.

This county is very broken and mountainous, particularly as it approaches the Blue Ridge. Between the ridges of mountains are many beautiful